REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

At the outset, appreciation is expressed to Examiner Ho and Examiner Swann for their time and attention during the interview that was conducted at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on June 3, 2003. The remarks below discuss the substance of the interview.

As discussed during the interview, the claims in this application are directed to the construction of a vehicle door lock system. During the interview, the undersigned explained that by positioning the electric driving source in the upper portion of the housing, potential difficulties that might otherwise arise if the electric driving source is disposed in the lower portion of the housing are not as likely to occur. More specifically, the electric driving source is positioned in the upper portion of the housing so that the entire electric driving source is positioned above the insertion groove into which the striker is movable. With this positioning, if water should enter the housing in the area of the insertion groove, the electric driving source is not as likely to be potentially adversely affected as if the electric driving source is positioned at a location where such water could undesirably impact the electric driving source.

As also explained during the interview, the arrangement of the electric driving source above the insertion groove is illustrated in the drawing figures. For example, Fig. 7 illustrates that the electric driving source 25 is located above the engaging pin 27b of the

active lever 27, and the engaging pin 27b is positioned relative to the supporting pin 41a of the latch 41 in the manner illustrated in Fig. 4. Further, Fig. 3 illustrates that the supporting pin 41 a of the latch 41 is positioned above the insertion groove 16a into which the striker 45 is movable to be received by a portion of the latch mechanism to latch the vehicle door to the vehicle body. Thus, these illustrations show that the entire electric driving source 25, exclusive of for example the worm gear 25a which extends from the electric driving source, is above the insertion groove 16a.

Independent Claims 2 and 8 have been amended to recite the positioning of the entire electric driving source above the insertion groove 16a. In addition, the specification has been amended to describe this originally disclosed subject matter. Also, Fig. 4 has been amended to include reference numerals 27b and 41a. Formal drawings incorporating these changes are submitted with this paper.

As was further explained during the interview, this claimed arrangement of the electric driving source relative to the insertion groove is not disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 6,102,453 to *Cetnar*. Fig. 3 of *Cetnar* illustrates the location of the insertion groove just below the pivot pin 39 of the latching member 38 which engages the striker. In addition, Fig. 4 illustrates the position of the pivot pin 39 relative to the electric motors 144, 174. These illustrations in Figs. 3 and 4 establish that the motors 144, 174 disclosed in *Cetnar* are not positioned above the insertion groove. Thus, as recognized by Examiner Ho and Examiner Swann at the conclusion of the interview, the claimed door lock system recited in

independent Claims 2 and 8 is patentably distinguishable over the disclosure contained in *Cetnar*.

It is noted that the amended versions of Claims 2 and 8 discussed with Examiners Ho and Swann during the interview referred to the insertion groove *in the housing*. This reference to the insertion groove in the housing is not included in the amended versions of Claims 2 and 8 presented in this Amendment because the base plate 16 in which the insertion groove is formed according to the disclosed and illustrated embodiment may or may not be considered a part of the housing.

As a final point, it is noted that the references to the electric distribution plate previously added to Claims 2 and 8 have been deleted. Also, the third clause of Claim 2 has been amended without narrowing the claim scope to change the recitation of latch mechanism to link mechanism and to change the recitation of link mechanism to latch mechanism. These changes have been made solely for purposes of consistency with the earlier language in Claim 2 defining the latch mechanism and the link mechanism.

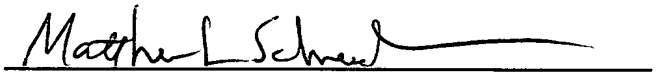
At the conclusion of the interview, Examiners Ho and Swann advised that the amended versions of Claims 2 and 8 raise new issues which would require further consideration and search. Thus, the Examiners advised that an Amendment presenting the amended versions of Claims 2 and 8 would not be entered. For this reason, a Request for Continued Examination is being filed with this Amendment.

In light of the foregoing, withdrawal of the rejection of record and allowance of this application are earnestly solicited.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: 

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Date: June 5, 2003